

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

22-011A

ORLEANS

EAS.594

Town/City: Eastham

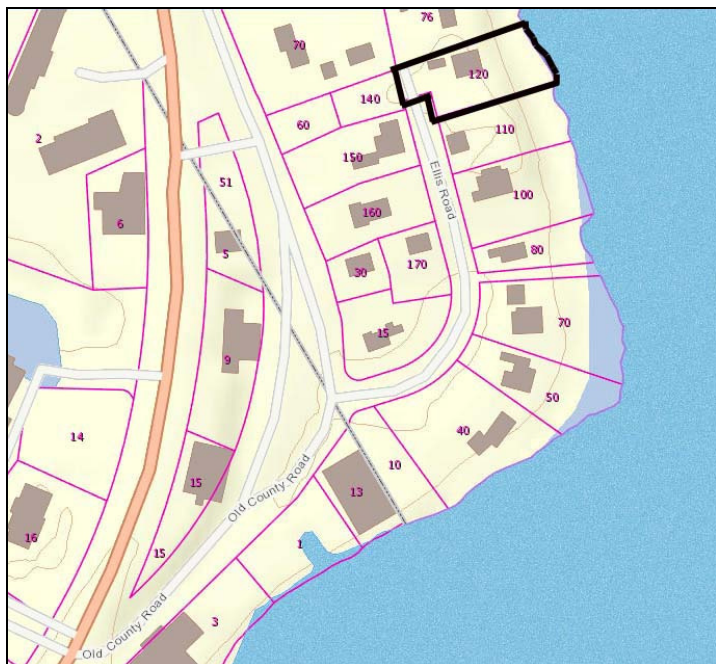
Place: South Eastham

Photograph



View from southwest.

Locus Map (north at top)



Address: 120 Ellis Road

Historic Name: William W. & Luella R. Wallace House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1929-30

Source: tax records, deeds

Style/Form: Bungalow

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete block

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/wood

Roof: asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: 1-stall garage

Major Alterations (with dates): second story addition on rear (1990)

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .23 acre

Setting: The subject property is located at the north end and east of Ellis Rd. with water frontage on Town Cove, an inlet from the Atlantic Ocean. It is contained within the Ellis single family residential subdivision and surrounded by other residential dwellings.

Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates with Kathryn Grover

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: March 2013

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

120 ELLIS ROAD

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

This dwelling follows the form of a modified Bungalow, with its swooping gable roof that extends over a small front pavilion and adjoining small front entrance porch. A front gabled dormer is located above the pavilion. The house is clad with the weathered wood shingles and white trim ubiquitous on Cape Cod. There is an exterior brick endwall chimney on the left (north) side. The front facade has three bays with the front entrance nearly centered, to left of the one-bay front pavilion. In 1990 a large rear second story addition was constructed, providing greater view of Town Cove.¹ It appears that all the windows have been replaced with one-over-one sash, possibly at the same time as the addition.²

A single-stall, wood frame, front gabled garage is located in the front yard. It matches the wood shingle siding and trim of the house. A low retaining wall is located between the house and the water's edge.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Deeds make it possible to pinpoint the build date of the house at 120 Ellis Road with some precision. In late June 1929, Louis W. Reinhardt of Brockton deeded a lot he had acquired only three months earlier to William W. Wallace of Fitchburg. In April 1930, Wallace transferred title to the same lot, with its buildings, to his wife Luella, which indicates that the house was built between those two dates.

The house at 120 Ellis Road was built on lot 1 of a twenty-seven lot subdivision platted by Gilbert E. Ellis of Brewster in April 1925. Ellis was a farmer, realtor, and owner of a shore net and pound fishery and was born in Brewster in 1867; his father, Thaddeus, was a fisherman, and his mother, Caroline J. Norway, was born in Spain. Ellis began his career as a store clerk when he was fourteen, if not younger. At the time of his marriage in 1887 he worked as a salesman. The 1900 census shows Ellis as a fisherman; the 1910 census shows him more specifically as a weir fisherman. He was among a declining number of Cape fishermen in what was termed the "shore net and pound fishery," which used large nets attached to a wood framework extending from the shore outward to catch such inshore schooling fish as herring and menhaden; these were sold as bait to the offshore fishing industry, and other species caught in the nets were sold to urban fresh-fish markets after rail lines reached the Cape in the 1870s. In 1914 the town of Brewster granted Ellis a permit to build six fish pounds in its coastal waters, and by 1920 Ellis was one of three Brewster men who ran a pound fishery; he employed seven men, among the most of any of the 43 pound fisheries in the state, and caught \$3100 of fish.³

Once a prosperous industry on Cape Cod, the pound fishery began to decline after World War I, and by 1920 Ellis was probably preparing to leave the industry. The 1920 census shows him as a farmer, and by 1929 he is listed as a realtor. In September 1924 he bought four acres in South Eastham bordered mostly by the state highway, Town Cove, and what was, for a brief time, a canal that connected Town Cove to the river at Boat Meadow on Cape Cod Bay, a distance of less than a mile.⁴ Ellis acquired the tract from New York City insurance broker Frederick Dorflinger Suydam, whose father, William Farrington Suydam, was an affluent Pennsylvania silk manufacturer and a summer resident of Orleans. The tract was part of the far larger holdings of Captain Heman Smith and his wife Louisiana Crosby Smith, who lived at 70 Old State Highway (EAS.43). In 1881, five years after the Smiths were lost at sea in the wreck of the bark *Burnside*, their children sold the property to their sibling Francis M. Smith (1852-1922), who in 1898 sold it to Somerville carpenter George S. Newcomb, an Orleans native. In 1913 Newcomb's son, George E. Newcomb, sold the four-acre tract to Albert F. Sherman, superintendent of the quarantine station on Gallup's Island in Boston Harbor, and in 1916 Sherman and his wife sold it to Frederick Suydam's mother, Mary Elizabeth Dorflinger Suydam.⁵

By January 1926 Ellis had built a house—what is now 76 Old State Highway—on the northernmost 1.5 acres of the tract, and in that month he sold that 1.5-acre tract with its buildings to Roscoe S. Walton, a Maine-born pharmacist turned innkeeper. The town assessor's records show Ellis with 2.5 acres and no structures in April 1926. Ellis in fact did not begin to sell any of the house lots in his subdivision until April 1928. In January and April of 1929, Ellis sold lots 1, 2, and 3 to Louis William Reinhardt,

¹ Town of Eastham building permit records, application dated Jan. 11, 1990, which followed correspondence dated Sept. 21, 1989, regarding relocation of a new septic system.

² Town of Eastham building permit records are incomplete and do not specify this work.

³ On the pound fishery, see Matthew McKenzie, *Clearing the Coastline: The Nineteenth-Century Ecological & Cultural Transformation of Cape Cod* (Hanover, NH, and London: University Press of New England, 2010), especially 11-12, 33, 91, 96, 138-39, 164, 172; *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Harbor and Land Commissioners For the Year 1914* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1915), 100; and "Returns from the Shore Net and Pound Fisheries for the Year 1920," *Annual Report of the Division of Fisheries and Game for the Year Ending November 30, 1920* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1921), 151-58.

⁴ Alice A. Lowe, comp., *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham*, 4th ed. (Eastham, MA: Eastham Historical Society, 1968), 35-36, states that the canal was dug in 1804 through "land following very nearly the boundary line between the towns of Eastham and Orleans" and became known as "Jeremiah's Gutter" where it crossed the property of Jeremiah Smith. A shallow channel, the canal filled quickly, and in 1817 the Eastham and Orleans Canal Proprietors built a wider one, but it was abandoned at some unstated later date.

⁵ William H. Smith, Boston; Mary M. Smith and Nellie J. Smith, all formerly of Eastham, to Francis M. Smith, 1 November 1881, Northern Barnstable County Registry of Deeds (BCD) 148:366; Francis M. Smith, Somerville, to George S. Newcomb, 5 November 1898, BCD 296:12; George S. Newcomb to George E. Newcomb, 28 May 1909, BCD 296:105; George E. Newcomb to Albert F. Sherman, Boston, 6 January 1913, BCD 321:21; Albert F. and Emma L. Sherman to Mary E. Suydam, Montclair NJ, 15 August 1916, BCD 345:440; Frederick D. Suydam, NYC, to Gilbert E. Ellis, East Brewster, 4 September 1924, BCD 409:454.

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who was born in Hanson in 1870 and worked as a last maker and lasting shop foreman in Brockton from the mid-1910s through at least 1940.⁶ Reinhardt built a cottage and garage on lots 2 and 3 (110 Ellis, not extant) by 1931 and sold lot 1, apparently undeveloped, to William W. Wallace in June 1929, and by April 1930 the cottage at 120 Ellis Road had been built.⁷

Walter William Wallace (later shown as William W. Wallace) was born in Bradford, England, about 1883 and came to the United States in 1905. In 1908 in Fitchburg, where he managed a restaurant, he married Luella Rebecca Fletcher, then twenty-seven years old and a supervisor at New England Telephone and Telegraph Company. By 1910 the couple was living in Worcester in the household of Luella's parents, and William Wallace was a city policeman. By 1920 the Wallaces moved to Fitchburg, and by 1927 he had been promoted to lieutenant in the city's police force.

Eastham tax records for 1937 show William Wallace as owner of a cottage valued at \$1700, a garage worth \$150, two house lots, and half of another house lot; 1947 tax records show more specifically that the lots he owned were lot 1 (on which 120 Ellis was built), lot 21, directly across Ellis Road, and half of lot 2; Wallace had built only on lot 1.⁸

The Wallaces owned 120 Ellis Road until 1967, when they sold all of their Ellis Road property to Rudolf and Naomi Westerman; five months later the Westermans sold it to Martha L. Smith of Douglaston, New York, who in turn sold it at the end of 1968 to Lois P. Ransom, also a Douglaston resident. Ransom moved to California by January 1981,⁹ when she sold the property to Marcelle W. Farrington of Wayland. Farrington placed 120 Ellis Road in trust in June 1992.

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SUPPLEMENTARY IMAGES & PHOTOGRAPHS (credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-2013 unless otherwise noted)

⁶ Gilbert E. Ellis to Louis W. Reinhardt, 6 March 1929, BCD 464:327. In 1937 Reinhardt also bought lots 19 and 20 in the Ellis subdivision; see BCD 538:472 and sold the north half of lot 2 to the Wallaces in 1932 (BCD 487:544).

⁷ Louis W. Reinhardt, Brockton, to William W. Wallace, 29 June 1929, BCD 465:393; William W. Wallace to Luella R. Wallace, April 1930, BCD 474:94

⁸ The transfer of lot 21 is in Gilbert E. Ellis to William W. and Luella R. Wallace, Fitchburg, 7 November 1936, BCD 523:95.

⁹ William W. Wallace to Rudolf C. and Naomi E. Westerman, 21 October 1967, BCD 1381:730; Rudolf C. and Naomi E. Westerman to Martha L. Smith, 30 March 1968, BCD 1395:1078; Martha L. Smith, Douglaston NY, to Lois P. Ransom, Douglaston NY, 30 December 1968, BCD 1427:1095; Lois P. Ransom, formerly Long Island now Berkeley CA, to Marcelle W. Farrington, Wayland, 12 January 1981, BCD 3241:77; Marcelle W. Farrington, 120 "Off Ellis Road," to Marcelle W. Farrington, trustee Farrington Nominee Trust, 23 June 1992, BCD 8088:305.

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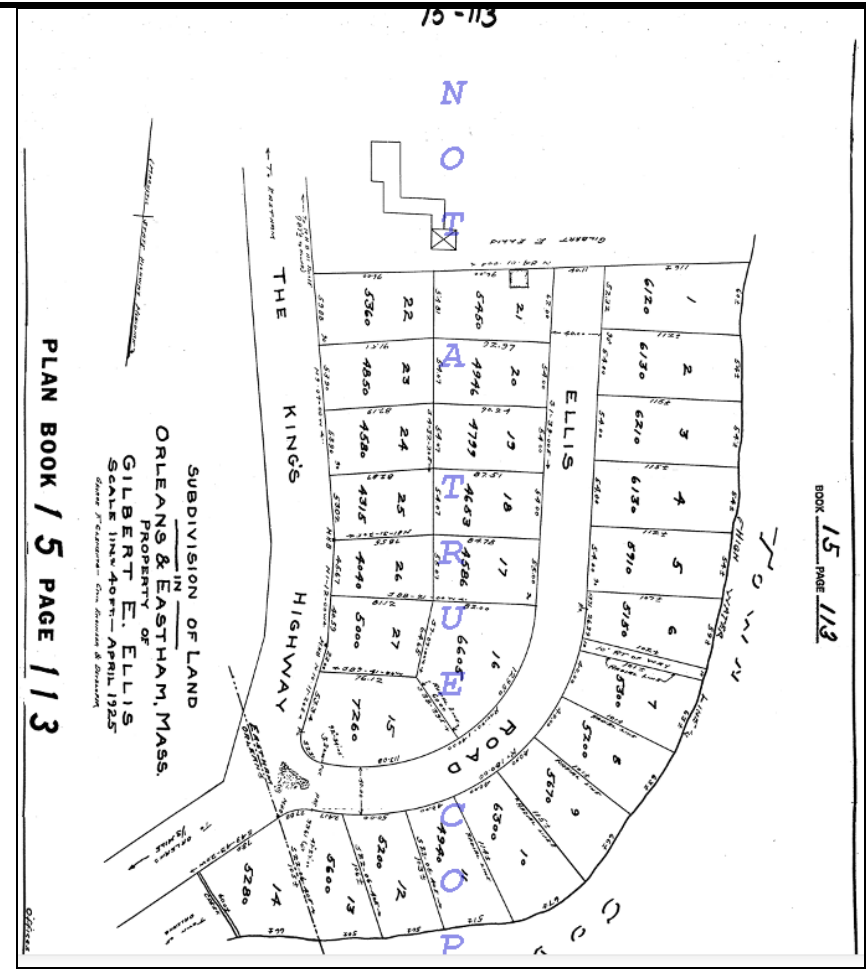
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The 1925 Ellis subdivision (BCP 15:113): 120 Ellis Road occupies Lot 1.



View from west.



Aerial view from east (courtesy of Bing Maps)